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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CA-01 SCS-06 HA-05 SY-05 USSS-00
AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /086 W

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P 222041Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5044

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

(☒) Release () Excise () Deny

Exemption(s):

~~Classify~~ () In Part (☒) In Full **DECLASSIFIED**

() Classify as () Extend as () Downgrade to

Date Declassify on Reason

[REDACTED] BUENOS AIRES 2172

E.O. 11652 N/A
TAGS CASC, SHUM, AR
SUBJECT 19 JEHOVAHS WITNESSES FREED WITHOUT CHARGE
PROVINCES EXPEL JEHOVAHS WITNESSES CHILDREN BY DECREE

REF: A BUENOS AIRES 2101 B BUENOS AIRES 1261

1. THE 19 JEHOVAHS WITNESSES PICKED UP IN
A POLICE RAID IN MAR DEL PLATA MARCH 19
HAVE BEEN RELEASED WITHOUT CHARGE, ACCORDING
TO AMERICAN WITNESS REPRESENTATIVE CHARLES
EISENHOWER (SEE REF A).

THE 19 WITNESSES,
INCLUDING SEVERAL CHILDREN, WERE HELD
30 HOURS. THEY APPEARED BEFORE A FEDERAL
JUDGE BUT NO CHARGES WERE MADE AGAINST THEM.

2. IN ANOTHER LESS ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENT,
THE PROVINCE OF BUENOS AIRES HAS ORDERED
ALL PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS TO INSIST THAT
CHILDREN REGISTER AND SALUTE THE FLAG OR
SING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM. ACCORDING TO EISENHOWER, IF A CHILD REFUSES

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TO DO SO, HE IS TO BE EXPELLED FROM PUBLIC SCHOOL. THE
DIRECTIVE, WHICH MENTIONS THE JEHOVAHS WITNESSES BY NAME,
WAS DECREED BY PROVINCIAL EDUCATIONAL AUTHORITIES, IN

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FEBRUARY. TEACHERS WHO FAIL TO FOLLOW THE ORDER ARE
SUBJECT TO DISMISSAL.

3. EISENHOWER INFORMED EMBOFF THAT SIMILAR DECREES
HAVE BEEN PASSED IN A NUMBER ARGENTINE PROVINCES AND
THAT AT LEAST 100 WITNESSES CHILDREN HAVE BEEN BARRED
FROM ATTENDING PUBLIC SCHOOLS. IN SOME CASES, HOWEVER,
THE TEACHERS "LOOK THE OTHER WAY", EISENHOWER SAID, AND
SIMPLY REPORT THAT NO WITNESSES ARE ENROLLED IN THE
SCHOOL. THE DECREE FOLLOWED THE SUPREME COURT DECISION
WHICH RULED IN EFFECT THAT WITNESSES CANNOT BE EXPELLED FROM PUBLIC
SCHOOL SIMPLY FOR BELONGING TO THE BANNED SECT, BUT LEFT
OPEN THE QUESTION OF WHETHER EXPULSION IS PERMITTED IF
THE STUDENT CAN BE SHOWN TO HAVE REFUSED TO HONOR
NATIONAL SYMBOLS. (SEE REF B).

4. EISENHOWER SAID INDIVIDUAL PARENTS MAY TRY TO TEST
THE NEW PROVINCIAL DECREES IN COURT, AN ACTION DENIED
TO THE WITNESSES ORGANIZATION AS A WHOLE WHILE IT IS
BANNED FROM OPERATING IN ARGENTINA.
CASTRO

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